



New York City firefighters work the scene of a large fire and a partial building collapse in the East Village neighborhood of New York on Thursday, March 26, 2015. (AP Photo/John Minchillo) Page 5

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## US, Iran nuke talks enter critical round ahead of deadline

MATTHEW LEE

AP Diplomatic Writer

LAUSANNE, Switzerland

(AP) — Nuclear negotiations between the United States and Iran entered a critical phase on Thursday with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry meeting his Iranian counterpart less than a week away from a deadline to secure the outline of a deal.

With the clock ticking, Kerry and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and their teams huddled Thursday in the Swiss resort town of Lausanne on Lake Geneva trying to overcome still significant gaps after nearly two years of negotiations between Iran and the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and Germany. The top diplomats from Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia are expected to join the talks if the U.S. and Iran are close to an agreement.

U.S. officials say the March 31 deadline is achievable but remains uncertain. En route to Switzerland with Kerry on Wednesday, one official said the American side can see a path to get to an agreement by the end of March as the last round of talks produced more progress than many previous rounds. The official was not authorized to discuss the talks by name and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Iranian side was more upbeat. Ali Akbar Salehi, Tehran's top nuclear official, told Iran's IRNA news agency that the talks have already reached a "common understanding" on technical issues.

Salehi, who also is at the talks, added he was optimistic that a comprehensive deal also was within reach.

The pressure is high. The seven nations have set themselves a March 31 deadline for the outline of a final accord they hope to seal by the end of June. Both President Barack Obama and Iran's Ayatollah Ali Khamenei have spoken against what would be a third extension of the talks.

And, looming over this round of talks are the crises in Yemen, where U.S. allies, including Saudi Arabia, have launched air strikes against Iranian-backed Shiite rebels that toppled the government, and Iraq, where the U.S. is now providing air support to the Iraqi government's Iranian-backed offensive to retake the city of Tikrit from Islamic State group militants. □



US Secretary of State John Kerry walks outside the hotel during a break after a bilateral meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in Lausanne, Switzerland, Thursday March 26, 2015. Nuclear negotiations between the United States and Iran entered a critical phase on Thursday with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry meeting his Iranian counterpart less than a week away from a deadline to secure the outline of a deal.

(AP Photo/Keystone, Laurent Gillieron)





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## "Vote-a-Rama"

# In the Senate, a day of votes that don't count

JONATHAN WEISMAN

© 2015 New York Times

**WASHINGTON** - Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, wants to make sure children don't munch on marijuana. Sen. David Vitter, R-La., is bent on preventing "Washington elites" from forcing Americans to give up their paper dollar bills and use coins like Europeans.

Sen. Dean Heller, R-Nev., would like to lift protections afforded to the sage grouse, while Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., wants to protect the Northern long-eared bat.

The "Vote-a-Rama" has begun.

In one of those dubious traditions of Congress' upper chamber, the Senate has

opened its well to an unlimited number of amendments to the budget blueprint for the coming fiscal year. Some are politically freighted. Some are parochial. Some are serious. Some are not.

But none of them are binding, and collectively they are time-consuming. The Senate is likely to stay in



Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) with an aide as he walks to the Senate floor on Capitol Hill in Washington, March 26, 2015. The Senate may stay in session through the night for the "Vote-a-Rama," a time-consuming spree of non-binding amendments to be considered before the budget itself can come to a vote -- likely around dawn.

(G. Demczuk/The New York Times)



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session through the night Thursday, finally voting on the budget itself by dawn. At last count, 633 amendments have been introduced. Not all will be voted on, but the tally is quite likely to grow.

Asked what the point of the Vote-a-Rama was, Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the majority leader, paused, then laughed and walked away.

Already, the Senate has unanimously approved an amendment by Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., to prevent the United Nations or any other international institution from acting to the detriment of Israel. But the motion by Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., to lift strict spending limits on defense and domestic programs over

the next two days, was rejected on party lines. Never mind that some Republicans - including Sens. John McCain of Arizona and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina - say they want to do just that.

Five Republicans did support Sen. Bernard Sanders, I-Vt., and his amendment recognizing the reality of global climate change. It failed anyway.

Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski of Maryland put forth an amendment to ensure equal pay for women but it failed, 54-45, but she is a Democrat after all. The amendment of Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., to ensure equal pay for women passed, 56-43.

The Senate is only getting started. □



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## Explosion, Fire Rattle New York City's East Village



Firefighters arrive on the scene, minutes after an apparent explosion in the East Village of New York, March 26, 2015. The blast touched off a fire that later collapsed the building and set an adjacent one alight, injuring a dozen or more — at least three of them critically.  
(Michael Seto/The New York Times)

MARC SANTORA

AL BAKER

© 2015 New York Times

**NEW YORK** - A powerful explosion in the East Village caused one building to collapse and ignited a large fire in a neighboring building Thursday afternoon, leaving at least a dozen people injured, at least three critically.

Francis X. Gribbon, chief spokesman for the New York Fire Department, said the preliminary indication was that some kind of gas explosion preceded the inferno.

"It was probably a gas thing, it looks like," he said. "But that's not confirmed." By 4:05 p.m. - less than an hour after it was first reported - the event was in the seventh alarm, Gribbon said, meaning that roughly 250 firefighters were on the location from about 50 Fire Department units. The buildings are at 121 and

123 Second Ave.

He said the first reports the department received were for a building collapse.

When units first arrived, he said, "there was a partial building collapse."

The authorities were closing down the surrounding streets, concerned about the building collapsing further and sending debris flying. The fire seemed to build in intensity after neighbors heard what they described as a loud boom. "We've got two buildings, fully involved with fire," said James Long, a spokesman for the Fire Department.

With flames rising from the top of the brownstones, firefighters battled the blaze and raced to keep it from spreading.

The police said the chaos was reflected in several calls to 911, which began streaming in about 3:17 p.m. Several callers described hearing an explo-

sion.

Nathan Blaney was at a nearby bar on St. Marks Place when he heard an explosion. His hands still shaking minutes later, he recounted running to the corner and finding about six injured people laid out on the sidewalk.

Blaney took photos of the wreckage. The facade of the first floor of the building, which housed an Asian restaurant, was entirely blown out. Shards of glass reached the sidewalk across the street. Blood was splattered up and down the block and across the street. One man in a black apron had blood seeping from his head. Several other people were bleeding and covered with dust.

One woman was trapped on the building's fire escape, apparently after climbing out of her apartment, Blaney said. She was stuck on the second floor,

afraid to come down.

So a pedestrian - visible in photos Blaney took - jumped onto the hanging ladder, climbed up and helped her clamber to the sidewalk.

"I was shaking like a leaf," Blaney said.

At 3:59 p.m. a loud rumble sounded and the lower facade of one of the buildings began moving. A moment later it slid slowly

to the sidewalk in a mix of glass and loose bricks.

Heavy gray smoke filled the air, and a few moments later as it began to lift it could be seen that no part of the building was left standing.

Jordi Trachtenberg was smoking an electronic cigarette on St. Marks Place, trying to calm down after an explosion "rocked his apartment and made him jump" from his chair. □

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## Jesse Jackson's son leaves federal prison for halfway house



In this 2013 photo, former Illinois Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr., leaves federal court in Washington after being sentenced to 2 1/2 years in prison for misusing \$750,000 in campaign funds. Jackson Jr. was released from prison early Thursday, his father said.

(AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

**CARYN ROUSSEAU**  
**Associated Press**

CHICAGO (AP) — Former U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr., the son of a prominent civil rights activist, was released from an Alabama federal prison early Thursday, two years after pleading guilty to spending \$750,000 in campaign money on personal items, his father said.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson described his son's release from the minimum security federal prison camp at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama, as a "joyous reunion" and said the younger Jackson was doing "very well."

Jackson, a 50-year-old Illinois Democrat, began his sentence on Nov. 1, 2013. The U.S. Bureau of Prisons lists his release date as Sept. 20, 2015.

Jackson Sr. later said that his son will be living in Washington at a transition-

al facility known as a halfway house for six months. Federal officials have not confirmed that. Another possibility under U.S. Bureau of Prisons policy is for Jackson to serve the remainder of his 2 1/2-year term under home confinement.

Jackson served in Congress from 1995 until he resigned in November 2012.

Jackson's wife, Sandra Jackson, a former Chicago alderman, was sentenced to a year in prison for filing false joint federal income tax returns. She must serve her term after her husband completes his sentence.

According to court documents, the Jacksons spent campaign money on TV's, restaurant dinners, an expensive watch and other costly personal items. When Jackson was sentenced the judge scolded him for using the money as a "piggy bank."

## US: Chicago-area cousins planned terrorist attacks

**MICHAEL TARM**  
**Associated Press**

CHICAGO (AP) — A state militia soldier vowed to bring "the flames of war to the heart" of America if he was unable to get to the Middle East to join the Islamic State group, and his cousin bragged that he could kill at least 150 people in a terrorist attack in the U.S., federal prosecutors said Thursday in announcing their arrests.

Hasan R. Edmonds, a 22-year-old member of the Illinois National Guard, was arrested Wednesday night at Chicago Midway International Airport while trying to board a plane for the first leg of a journey that eventually would take him to Egypt. Jonas M. Edmonds,

29, was arrested earlier that day at his home, the U.S. attorney's office in Chicago said in a statement. Both men are U.S. citizens from the Chicago suburb of Aurora.

The National Guard is a component of the U.S. Armed Forces that state governors can call up in times of emergencies.

According to an unsealed federal complaint, Jonas Edmonds planned to carry out an attack in the U.S. after Hasan Edmonds left the country.

Without naming it, complaint says they contemplated an armed attack against a U.S. military facility in northern Illinois where Hasan Edmonds had trained. □



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### *Grilled marinated Skirted Steak and Shrimps*

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or

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## US Financial Front:

# How government aims to protect users of 'payday' loans



Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Richard Cordray, center, listens to comments during a panel discussion in Richmond, Va., Thursday, March 26, 2015. Payday lenders would face federal rules aimed at protecting low-income borrowers from being buried by fees and debts under proposals being unveiled Thursday by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

(AP Photo/Steve Helber)

**JOSH BOAK**

**AP Economics Writer**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Each month, more than 200,000 needy U.S. households take out what's advertised as a brief loan.

Many have run out of money between paychecks. So they obtain a "payday" loan to tide them over. Problem is, such loans can often bury them in fees and debts. Their bank accounts can be closed, their cars repossessed.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau proposed rules Thursday to protect Americans from stumbling into what it calls a "debt trap." At the heart of the plan is a requirement that payday lenders verify borrowers' incomes before approving a loan.

The government is seeking to set standards for a multibillion-dollar industry

that has historically been regulated only at the state level.

"The idea is pretty common sense: If you lend out money, you have to first make sure that the borrower can afford to pay it back," President Barack Obama said in a speech in Birmingham, Alabama. "But if you're making that profit by trapping hard-working Americans into a vicious cycle of debt, you've got to find a new business model."

The payday industry warns that if the rules are enacted, many impoverished Americans would lose access to any credit. The industry says the CFPB should further study the needs of borrowers before setting additional rules.

"The bureau is looking at things through the lens of one-size-fits-all," argued Dennis Shaul, chief execu-

tive of the Community Financial Services Association of America, a trade group for companies that offer small-dollar short-term loans or payday advances.

But that lens also reveals some troubling pictures.

Wynette Pleas of Oakland, California, says she endured a nightmare after taking out a payday loan in late 2012. A 44-year-old mother of three, including a blind son, Pleas borrowed \$255 to buy groceries and pay the electricity bill.

But as a part-time nursing assistant, she worked only limited hours. Pleas told her lender she'd be unable to meet the loan's two-week deadline. The lender then tried to withdraw the repayment straight from her bank account even though Pleas lacked the funds. The result: A \$35 overdraft fee and a bounced check.

After the incident was repeated five more times, Pleas said the bank closed her account.

Collection agencies began phoning Pleas and her family. About six months ago, she learned that the \$255 loan had ballooned to a debt of \$8,400. At that point, she faced the possibility of jail.

"It's not even worth it," said Pleas, who is trying to rebuild her finances and her life.

Roughly 2.5 million households received a payday loan in 2013, according to an analysis of Census data by the Urban Institute, a Washington-based

think tank. The number of households with such loans has surged 19 percent since 2011, even as the U.S. economy has healed from the Great Recession and hiring has steadily improved.

"These are predatory loan products," said Greg Mills, a senior fellow at the Urban Institute. "They rely on the inability of people to pay them off to generate fees and profits for the providers."

The rules would apply not only to payday loans but

also to vehicle title loans — in which a car is used as collateral — and other forms of high-cost lending. Before extending a loan due within 45 days, lenders would have to ensure that borrowers could repay the entire debt on schedule. Incomes, borrowing history and other financial obligations would need to be checked to show that borrowers were unlikely to default or roll over the loan.

In general, there would be a 60-day "cooling off period" between loans. □

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# Turmoil in Yemen escalates as Saudi Arabia bombs rebels

**AHMED AL-HAJ  
HAMZA HENDAWI  
Associated Press**

**SANAA, Yemen (AP)** — The turmoil in Yemen grew into a regional conflict Thursday, with Saudi Arabia and its allies bombing Shiite rebels allied with Iran, while Egyptian officials said a ground assault will follow the airstrikes.

Iran denounced the Saudi-led air campaign, saying it "considers this action a dangerous step," and oil prices jumped in New York and London after the offensive.

The military action turned impoverished and chaotic Yemen into a new front in the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Yemen's U.S.-backed President Abed-Rabbo Mansour Hadi, who fled the country Wednesday as the rebels known as Houthis advanced on his stronghold in the southern port of Aden, reappeared Thursday. He arrived by plane in Saudi Arabia's capital of Riyadh, Saudi state TV reported.

Starting before dawn, Saudi

warplanes pounded an air base, military bases and anti-aircraft positions in the capital of Sanaa and flattened a number of homes near the airport, killing at least 18 civilians, including six children. Another round followed in the evening, again rocking the city.

Rebel leader Abdul-Malik al-Houthi angrily accused the United States, Saudi Arabia and Israel of launching a "criminal, unjust, brutal and sinful" campaign aimed at invading and occupying Yemen.

"Yemenis won't accept such humiliation," he said in a televised speech Thursday night, calling the Saudis "stupid" and "evil."

The Houthis, who have taken over much of the country, mobilized thousands of supporters to protest the airstrikes, with one speaker lashing out at the Saudi-led coalition and warning that Yemen "will be the tomb" of the aggressors.

White House spokesman Eric Schultz told reporters on Air Force One en route to Alabama that President



**People search for survivors under the rubble of houses destroyed by Saudi airstrikes near Sanaa Airport, Yemen, Thursday, March 26, 2015. Saudi Arabia launched airstrikes Thursday targeting military installations in Yemen held by Shiite rebels who were taking over a key port city in the country's south and had driven the embattled president to flee by sea, security officials said.**

(AP Photo/Hani Mohammed)

Barack Obama had authorized logistical and intelligence support for the strikes, but that the U.S. is not joining with direct military action.

In the air assault code-named "Operation Decisive Storm," Saudi Arabia deployed some 100 fighter jets, 150,000 soldiers and other navy units, Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya TV reported. Also involved were aircraft from the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Jordan, Morocco, Sudan and Egypt, though it was not clear which carried out actual strikes.

Once the airstrikes have weakened the rebels and their allies in the military forces loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, a ground invasion of Yemen is planned by Egyptian Saudi and other forces.

The assault will come from Saudi Arabia and by landings on Yemen's coasts along the Red and Arabian seas, according to three Egyptian military and security officials.

Three to five Egyptian troop carriers are stationed offshore, they said, although the number of troops was not specified, and the timing of the operation was

not given.

The aim is not to occupy Yemen but to weaken the Houthis and their allies until they enter negotiations for power-sharing, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk about the plans with the press.

Egypt is "prepared for participation with naval, air and ground forces if necessary," Foreign Minister Sameh Shukri said at a gathering of Arab foreign ministers preparing for a weekend summit in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh. □

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## UN sounds positive note on Libya deal

**SKHIRAT, Morocco (AP)** — The U.N. envoy to Libya's peace talks sounded a positive note Thursday as negotiations between the rival governments took another break with a deal remaining elusive.

Bernardino Leon said after the latest round of talks — which he had called "decisive" — that the two sides would return by next week to continue discussing proposals for a unity government and security arrangements.

He maintained that prog-

ress had been made by narrowing the discussions down to a U.N. proposal and the two rival governments were committed to the process.

"We have gone beyond the point of no return and they are convinced there will be a national solution," he said at a resort town near the Moroccan capital where the talks are being held.

The U.N. has presented a detailed proposal for bringing together the warring parties, including main-

taining the internationally recognized elected parliament based in the eastern city of Tobruk.

Libya is torn apart by warring militias with two governments on either end of the country claiming legitimacy.

Radical groups pledging allegiance to the extremist Islamic State group are growing in power in the chaotic country, adding urgency for the international community for the warring sides to reach an agreement. □





## Nigeria's military pushes extremists before elections

Associated Press

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) —

Beefed up by new weapons from China, Russia and the Czech Republic, and strengthened by training from foreign advisers, Nigeria's military is forcing Boko Haram extremists from a string of northeastern towns as the country's prepares for elections the insurgents are threatening to disrupt. The military offensive caused a six-week postponement of critical presidential elections now being held Saturday, a delay that should allow voting by some of the more than 1.5 million people forced from their homes by the Islamic uprising. But many refugees are reluctant to return home, doubting whether Nigeria's military can maintain control over territory it recaptured from the insurgents. In just two months, Nigeria's military with help from troops from Chad, Niger and Cameroon has reclaimed about 30 towns and "liberated" the northeastern states of Adamawa and Yobe, leaving only 3 of 27 local government areas in Borno state under the sway of Boko Haram, according to the government spokesman on the insurgency, Mike Omeri. Even so, there are no plans to set up polling stations in newly recaptured areas, said local electoral commission spokeswoman Rifkatu Duku in Yola, capital of Adamawa state.

Continued on Page 27

## After US airstrikes, Iraq troops start final push for Tikrit

QASSIM ZAHRA

VIVIAN SALAMA

Associated Press

TIKRIT, Iraq (AP) —

Iraqi troops started the final phase of an offensive to recapture Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit on Thursday, a military official said, just hours after the United States launched airstrikes on the Islamic State-held city.

The push, however, is going ahead without the country's Iran-backed Shiite militias, which had been instrumental to the operation so far and which backed out in protest over the U.S. action.

Late Wednesday, the U.S. began airstrikes on Tikrit at Iraq's request and in support of the stalled ground offensive, Lt. Gen. James L. Terry, the commander of the U.S.-led campaign to defeat the Islamic State group.

He said the airstrikes would "destroy ISIL strongholds with precision, thereby saving innocent Iraqi lives while minimizing" unintended damage to civilian structures. ISIL is one of the acronyms for the Islamic State group.

A militia spokesman, Mouin al-Kadhimi, said Thursday that many of the Shiite fighters decided to boycott the Tikrit operation because of the "harmful" involvement of U.S. airstrikes. During the day, clashes intensified as Iraqi troops and special forces moved toward the city center, Lt. Gen. Abdul-Wahab al-Saadi told The Associated Press. An AP reporter heard a second round of airstrikes



Iraqi security forces prepare to attack Islamic State extremist positions in Tikrit, 130 kilometers (80 miles) north of Baghdad, Iraq, Thursday, March 26, 2015. Iraqi troops started the final phase of an offensive to recapture Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit on Thursday, a military official said, just hours after the United States launched airstrikes on the Islamic State held city.

(AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

over Tikrit.

Late Thursday, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi visited Camp Speicher military base near Tikrit to meet with military commanders and be briefed on their progress since U.S. airstrikes began.

The Islamic State group seized the Sunni city last summer during its lightning advance across northern and western Iraq. The battle for Tikrit is seen as a key step toward eventually driving the Islamic State group from Iraq's second largest city Mosul, which is further north.

Earlier, al-Abadi said Iraqi forces began the "final phase" in the Tikrit offensive but did not acknowledge that U.S.-led coalition forces were playing a direct

role. He said Iraqis, "and not anyone but you," will claim victory against the militant group.

The U.S. first launched airstrikes to reinforce Iraq's embattled military in August.

A spokesman for Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units, the vast majority of which consists of Iranian-backed Shiite militias, said that a number of Shiite militias, including Asaib Ahl al-Haq, Ketaeb Hizbollah and Muqtada al-Sadr's Peace Brigades are boycotting the Tikrit operation because of the involvement of U.S. forces.

"Their involvement is potentially harmful to the operation," militia spokesman al-Kadhimi told the AP, adding that the powerful Badr

Brigade will most likely join the boycott. "We led the fight to liberate al-Dawr, to liberate al-Alam, and we are capable of liberating Tikrit without the help of American forces."

Iranian military advisers have been providing significant support since the Tikrit offensive began on March 2, arming and training the Iraqi Shiite militias, which have played a prominent role on the battlefield. Militiamen make up more than two-thirds of the force fighting the Islamic State group in Tikrit.

But the top U.S. general for the Middle East said Thursday that Iranian forces and Shiite militia have left the fight and pulled back from Tikrit as a condition to U.S. involvement. □



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## Co-pilot deliberately slams plane in Alps; families ask why

**ANGELA CHARLTON**  
**DAVID McHUGH**  
**Associated Press**

**PARIS (AP)** — Passengers with moments to live screamed in terror and the pilot frantically pounded on the locked cockpit door as a 27-year-old German co-pilot deliberately and wordlessly smashed an Airbus carrying 150 people into an Alpine mountain-side.

The account Thursday of the final moments of Germanwings Flight 9525 prompted some airlines to immediately impose stricter cockpit rules — and raised haunting questions about the motive of the co-pilot, whose breathing never wavered as he destroyed the plane and the lives of those aboard.

"We have no idea of the reason," Marseille Prosecutor Brice Robin said, revealing the chilling conclusions investigators reached after reconstructing the final minutes of the flight from the plane's black box voice recorder. Co-pilot Andreas Lubitz's intention was "to destroy this plane."

French, German and U.S. officials said there was no indication of terrorism.

The prosecutor did not elaborate on why investigators do not suspect a political motive; instead they're focusing on the co-pilot's "personal, family and professional environment" to try to determine why he did it.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, whose nation lost 75 people on the flight, said the conclusions brought the tragedy to a "new, simply

incomprehensible dimension." Devastated families of victims visited the crash scene Thursday, looking across a windy mountain meadow toward where their loved ones died.

The Airbus A320 was flying

ing on the planned landing, Robin said.

The pilot, who has not been identified, left the cockpit for an apparent bathroom break, and Lubitz took control of the jet.

He suddenly started a man-

known to the crew does not go into effect if the person inside the cockpit specifically denies entry.

Instrument alarms went off, but no distress call ever went out from the cockpit, and the control tower's

thorities set up a viewing tent for family members to look toward the site of the crash, so steep and treacherous that it can only be reached by a long journey on foot or rappelling from a helicopter.

Lubitz's family was in France but was being kept separate from the other families, Robin said. German investigators searched his apartment and his parents' home in Montabaur, Germany, where the curtains were drawn.

The prosecutor's account prompted quick moves toward stricter cockpit rules — and calls for more.

Airlines in Europe are not required to have two people in the cockpit at all times, unlike the standard U.S. operating procedure, which was changed after the 9/11 attacks to require a flight attendant to take the spot of a briefly departing pilot.

Canada and Germany's biggest airlines, including Lufthansa and Air Berlin, as well as low-cost European carriers easyJet and Norwegian Air Shuttle announced new rules requiring two crew members to always be present.

Some experts said even two isn't enough, and called for rules to require three.

"The flight deck is capable of accommodating three pilots and there shouldn't ever be a situation where there is only one person in the cockpit," said James Hall, a former chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, referring to the "jump seats" all airliners are equipped with. □



**This is an undated image taken from Facebook of Germanwings co-pilot Andreas Lubitz in San Francisco California. Lubitz the co-pilot of the Germanwings jet barricaded himself in the cockpit and "intentionally" rammed the plane full speed into the French Alps on Tuesday, ignoring the captain's frantic pounding on the cockpit door and the screams of terror from passengers, a prosecutor said Thursday, March 26, 2015. In a split second, he killed all 150 people aboard the plane.**

(AP Photo)

from Barcelona to Duesseldorf on Tuesday when it lost radio contact with air traffic controllers and began plunging from its cruising altitude of 38,000 feet, before slamming into the mountainside eight minutes later. The prosecutor laid out in horrifying detail the final sounds heard in the cockpit extracted from the mangled voice recorder.

Lubitz, courteous in the first part of the trip, became "curt" when the captain began the mid-flight brief-

ing on the planned landing, Robin said.

There was no response. "It was absolute silence in the cockpit," the prosecutor said — except for the steady breathing he said indicated Lubitz was not panicked, and acted in a calm, deliberate manner.

The A320 is designed with safeguards to allow emergency entry into the cockpit if a pilot inside is unresponsive.

But the override code

pleas for a response went unanswered.

Just before the plane hit the mountain, passengers' cries of terror could be heard.

"The victims realized just at the last moment," Robin said. "We can hear them screaming."

Their families "are having a hard time believing it," he said, after briefing some of them in Marseille.

Many victims' relatives visited an Alpine clearing Thursday where French au-





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## Argentine appeals court throws out case against president

PETER PRENGAMAN

Associated Press

**BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP)** — A federal appeals court on Thursday threw out a case accusing President Cristina Fernandez and other top officials of a major cover-up deal with Iran, giving a victory of sorts to an administration that has been rocked by the mysterious death of the prosecutor who made the allegation.

In a 2-1 decision, the 1st Chamber of the Federal Court upheld a February decision by federal Judge Daniel Rafecas to dismiss the case. In a withering ruling, Rafecas said the case failed to present a single element of a possible crime. That decision was appealed by prosecutor Gerardo Pollicita, who argued that a full investigation, including testimony of top officials, was necessary to evaluate the merits of the accusations.

In Thursday's ruling, Judge Jorge Ballesterro wrote that there was "a notable disparity between what is claimed and what is proven." "It's the presence of evi-

dence that should lead to a criminal investigation and not the other way around," he wrote.

Dissenting Judge Eduardo Farah made the opposite argument, saying that opening an investigation was the only way to determine what was true.

Deciding against a probe "isn't just incorrect, it's contrary to what the law stipulates," he wrote.

The decision can be appealed to the Criminal Appeals Court.

Prosecutor Alberto Nisman leveled the allegations against Fernandez on Jan. 14, and four days later he was found shot dead in his bathroom. Nisman's death, which has captivated the South American nation and turned Argentines into armchair detectives, has yet to be solved.

Nisman accused Fernandez of making a deal with Iran to cover up the alleged roles of several Iranian officials wanted in the 1994 bombing of a Jewish community center that killed 85 people and wounded hundreds.

Nisman said Fernandez made the secret pact in

exchange for favorable trade deals with the Middle Eastern country. His

289-page investigation, which was published after his death, is based on

wire-taps of administration officials allegedly talking about the deal. □



Argentine President Cristina Fernandez speaks at Casa Rosada presidential palace in Buenos Aires, Argentina. On Thursday, March 26, 2015, a federal appeals court in Argentina has thrown out a case that accused President Cristina Fernandez of orchestrating a deal to cover up the alleged role of Iranian officials in the 1994 bombing of a Jewish community center.

(AP Photo/Victor R. Caivano)

## Prominent Venezuelan opposition leader Ceballos ordered kept in jail

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)

— A prominent opposition leader has completed a prison sentence for disobeying authority but will remain in jail while on trial for more serious charges related to his alleged support of anti-government unrest. Daniel Ceballos was removed as mayor of the western city of San Cristobal a year ago and quickly convicted by Venezuela's Supreme Court for refusing to follow government or-

ders to remove barricades used by demonstrators in violent standoff with police. On Thursday, a judge ordered his release saying he had completed his 12-month sentence.

But the release order appears to be symbolic because he remains on trial for more serious charges of rebellion and conspiracy. Ceballos' wife said her husband's defense team intends to seek bail in that case. □



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# Cuba, US to launch human rights dialogue Tuesday

**M. WEISSENSTEIN  
A. RODRIGUEZ  
Associated Press**

**HAVANA (AP)** — Cuba and the United States will debate human rights at a meeting in Washington on Tuesday in another sign of the thaw between the countries as they try to re-establish normal diplomatic relations after a 50-year freeze. The discussions seem unlikely to lead to short-term changes in the way ei-

ther country views rights issues. The U.S. is expected to press Cuba to allow its citizens greater freedom of speech, assembly and political activity. Cuba likely will respond with its own critiques of poverty, insufficient health-care coverage and excessive police force in the United States. But observers say even the start of a dialogue is an indication of progress in the countries' broader move to normalize relations.

The U.S. had hoped to open an embassy in Havana by next month's Summit of the Americas in Panama. Both sides have gone silent on the state of negotiations with two weeks until the summit, raising the question of whether restoring full diplomatic relations will be more complicated than some initially hoped. Other tracks, however, appear to be moving ahead as planned. A U.S. delegation of government tele-

communications experts on Thursday wrapped up a three-day trip to Havana that included meetings with Cuban officials and academics to explain a new policy permitting greater American private sector dealings with the island's state-run telecoms sector. The U.S. policy is designed to increase connectivity between the outside world and Cuba, which has one of the world's lowest rates

of Internet use and steep international calling costs that make calling family abroad out of bounds for many people here. Pedro Luis Pedrosó, Cuba's deputy director for multilateral affairs and international law, told reporters Thursday that "these conversations about human rights show that Cuba is ready to discuss any topic with the U.S., despite our differences, and from a basis of equality." □

## Puerto Rico prepares for luxury shopping amid recession



Customers order at the Habitant Restaurant inside Nordstrom, inside the newly built, The Mall of San Juan, in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Many Puerto Ricans do seem to have been busy shopping while the government struggles with \$73 billion in public debt and U.S. investors worry some of island's public agencies could go bankrupt.

(AP Photo/Ricardo Arduengo)

**DANICA COTO  
Associated Press**

**SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)** — A pair of nearly 5-inch black satin heels with a large gold alligator that serves as the front strap retails for almost \$1,600 at the

first Saks Fifth Avenue store to open in Puerto Rico, more than what the average person here earns in a month and where nearly half the population lives in poverty. While a nearly decade-

long recession has forced many Puerto Ricans to seek a more affordable life on the U.S. mainland, some of the world's priciest retailers have stores at The Mall of San Juan, a \$475 million shopping center opening

Thursday alongside one of the island's most crime-ridden public housing projects.

"We know that Puerto Rico has its challenges, but we're not basing our decision on the economy's ups and downs," said Manuel Vazquez, the mall's general manager.

"The sales of shoes, clothes and accessories in Puerto Rico have always been strong."

Puerto Ricans do seem to have been busy shopping while the government struggles with \$73 billion in public debt and U.S. investors worry some of island's public agencies could go bankrupt. Retail sales grew 0.5 percent over the past year to \$37.6 billion, with a 17 percent increase in sales at women's clothing stores, according to government statistics.

Shopping on credit is popular on this island, where the population of 3.65 million holds more than \$22 billion in consumer debt, compared with the \$3.3 trillion held by consumers on

the U.S. mainland. Laura Ortiz, a sociology professor at the University of Puerto Rico, said consumers she interviewed for her book "Shopping in Puerto Rico" told her they didn't worry about debt. The view was, "I'll handle it," she said.

That shop-until-you-drop mindset is on full display at the Plaza Las Americas, the largest shopping center in the Caribbean. It generates roughly twice the sales-per-square-foot of the average U.S. mall and draws up to 70,000 visitors daily.

Angel Diaz, who was shopping there with his girlfriend one recent afternoon, said they can't wait to explore the new Mall of San Juan. "They say the economy is bad, but the stores are always full," the teenager said.

Developers are betting the trend will continue at the new two-story, 650,000-square-foot mall. It has more than 70 stores, many new here, including Lululemon and Jimmy Choo. □

## 3 charged in \$2.1M tax evasion case in Puerto Rico

**SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)** — A doctor and two business owners in Puerto Rico were charged Thursday in a \$2.1 million tax evasion case in the U.S. territory's latest crackdown against suspected tax evaders. Justice Secretary Cesar Miranda said Dr. Roberto Garcia Morales has a debt of at least \$1.9 million on \$6.5

million in income he failed to declare on tax returns from 2009 to 2012. Garcia is an ophthalmologist in the western town of Mayaguez. He did not immediately return a message for comment. Miranda said one business owner, the president of a local Taco Maker restaurant, is charged with with-

holding more than \$58,000 in sales tax revenue owed to the government. Pedro Bigay Silva is accused of submitting only \$34 worth of sales tax revenue from 2009 to 2012. He could not be reached for comment. The other business owner, the president of a calibration services company, is

charged with withholding more than \$100,000 in employee tax contributions. Juan Oliveras Ortiz of Instrumentation Corps, Inc. is accused of submitting roughly \$23,000 from 2011 to 2013 and keeping the remainder for personal use. Oliveras did not return a message for comment. The charges come as the

legislature debates a proposed reform to cut down tax on evasion as well as institute a 16 percent value-added tax. Puerto Rico's Justice Department said it was reviewing 17 other potential tax evasion cases. A division within the island's Treasury Department is investigating 660 other such cases. □





April 13 to 18, 2015:

## A Prime Spot for Multihulls at Les Voiles de St. Barth

**ST. BARTH** - One of the principles behind Les Voiles de St. Barth since the event's creation back in 2010 is that all the boats, whatever their size or rating, are allowed to have free expression. In this way, in addition to the monohull craft, a number of multihulls also participate in the event each year.

The fleet of multihulls competing in Les Voiles de St. Barth is an eclectic one, but the Caribbean Sailing Association ([www.csamultihull.com](http://www.csamultihull.com)) has thought of everything. Indeed since last year its measurers have implemented a Multihull Ratings Rule. This special system for boats with two

it will compete alongside a 70-foot trimaran.

That 70-foot trimaran is Phaedo3, the former MOD 70 Foncia (launched in August 2011) with which Michel Desjoyeaux set the Round the Island record back in 2012 (two hours, 21 minutes and 25 seconds) shortly before winning the European Tour and finishing second in the Multi One Design Championship. Owned by American Lloyd Thornburg since the winter, the boat recently excelled at the RORC Caribbean 600. On-board, the famous names include Brian Thompson, Sam Goodchild and Pete Cummings. Suffice it to say



Caribbean 600 2013 while a certain Cam Lewis was aboard. However, neither Phaedo3 nor Paradox will be able to dawdle along the route if they want to offset their rating difference with regard to their rivals. Indeed, Steven Cucchiaro's 55' Gunboat Flow and Chris Groobey's Tocatta 60' won't be there just to make up the numbers. Designed in carbon epoxy to guarantee a lightweight structure, the former includes all the necessary cruising comfort without sacrificing performance in any way.

The same is true for the latter, built in China at Xia-men, which put in her first appearance on the world stage back in 2013, during the International Boat Show in Fort Lauderdale. You get the picture then, in this multihull class at Les Voiles de St. Barth, that there is a little something for everyone and some great surprises in store!

Don't miss the 6<sup>th</sup> Edition of Les Voiles de St. Barth, April 13 to 18, 2015.

For more information, visit: [www.lesvoilesdesaintbarth.com](http://www.lesvoilesdesaintbarth.com). □

or three hulls aims to be more fair and egalitarian in its rating, since it takes into account the daggerboard and weight characteristics in its awarding of handicaps. This enables a set of very different multihulls to take the same start line, a key factor given that this 2015 edition of the race will, for the first time, play host to Erik Maris' CG 32 Le Carré Diamond Genesis. A 32-foot foiling one-design catamaran launched in late 2012 and designed by Martin Fisher according to an idea by Laurent Lenne,

that in elapsed time she will be hard to beat, but victory on corrected time is not necessarily a given – far from it, in fact. "For this particular boat, the courses we'll be setting will doubtless be a bit small, so consequently it will be interesting to see how boats like Peter Aschenbrenner's Paradox performs," explains Poupon. This 63 footer regularly demonstrates that she is quick and perfectly adept at reaching over 30 knots of boat speed. She really showed what she was made of during the RORC





# The Blue Lobster Restaurant Continues to Satisfy!



**PALM BEACH** - It has been a wonderful three years since the Blue Lobster Restaurant opened its doors on Palm Beach. It's been a great experience, making lots of friends and repeat visitors that year after year come back and honor this small eatery with their presence and appreciation. The Blue lobster has created thousands of great memories for both tourists and locals alike on this paradise island. Looking back one can see how a small restaurant like the Blue Lobster, seating only 65 people, has been able to maintain its good name and the high quality of food and superb service, becoming a big name in Aruba's culinary arena, competing with the old timers and traditional restaurants of the island. All this has been possible due to the personalized

service and warmth felt immediately as guests enter, drawing honest reviews and super comments made by those who appreciate good food, good service and good prices. TripAdvisor just 3 weeks ago made The Blue Lobster Restaurant a TripAdvisor Recommended restaurant. The 10Best web site also placed The Blue Lobster in the list of the best restaurants of the island and The Best of Aruba just delivery the nomination to The Best Lobster Restaurant of Aruba for the year 2015-2016. New Menus are now available, which include: Lobster specialties (18 dishes); Great quality meats; Wonderful Italian Dishes; Fantastic Creole food, fresh seafood and local fish served a la Creole style; Vegetarian dishes; and Kids Menu. This unbelievable restau-

rant became a One Stop Restaurant for one-and-all; for anything you want can be found there. So 'The Blue Lobster Experience' is now guaranteed, don't miss it for anything in the world! We do encourage you to go to TripAdvisor and see for yourself what others are saying about this fantastic little place. It is all about the food, about the service and about the reasonable prices. This week, look for a fantastic EARLY BIRD for just \$21.00 P/P or our brand New LOBSTER DUO/COMBO. for just \$29.90

Some Of The Most Recent Reviews On Trip Advisor: "Special Evening And Special Service"

Great place and wonderful food!! We ate there on Sunday which was Mothers' Day in the UK. Our daugh-

ter called ahead to ensure that we had a great evening and we were given a special table with flowers, a welcome drink and a decorated dessert plate with a sparkler. The lobster and tuna were absolutely delicious and the ambience delightful. The service was excellent and the waiter even took pictures and sent them through to us later. All in all, it was a great night out and an evening to remember. We shall definitely go back again. To be recommended.  
-Visited March 2015

"The Blue Lobster Was A Wonderful Surprise"

We happened to win a gift certificate to the Blue Lobster at our resort and were pleasantly surprised. It is not a restaurant we would have chosen because I do not care for lobster and we thought that was what they served. The night we went was the night that they introduced their new menu which included much more than lobster! I had almond crusted Grouper and it was fabulous. Hubby had a combo of Lobster, shrimp and grouper and he said his was fabulous also. Can't wait to go back and try their chicken schnitzel. It is a very small restaurant across from Sole Mare and Barneys and well worth the trip! Ask for Orlando as a waiter he is great. A truly happy waiter. The service was great all around. All the wait staff attend to whoever needs attending.  
-Visited March 2015

"Luis Was A Great Server Good Lobster Tail"

Tried this restaurant as our last night. Followed TripAdvisor's raters. The service was

great. Drinks were poured well. For appetizer had the lobster bisque. It was good with lots of lobster just different from what I am accustomed to. It was quite dark. Maybe Creole style. For dinner we both had lobster tails. They were very good. Had the 13oz. good taste. The place is cozy and very family oriented.  
-Visited March 2015

"Excellent Food and service"

Great dinner, excellent service, nice ambience. One of the best dinners ever had on Aruba. Definitely



we will come back. Lobster bisque was delicious, jumbo tails with melted butter ...mmm...  
Highly recommended!  
-Visited March 2015

"Super WOW"

The best dinner experience i ever had Excellent food and wine pairing and a lot of fun. Small restaurant very professional staff. Thank you thank you Blue Lobster Team keep on doing a great work thanks to our waiter KEEP SMILING.  
-Visited March 2015.☐

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bust smoky flavors and excellent quality steaks, chicken, pork, and fish. Sizzle up your night with Famous Fajitas in either variety of chicken, beef, or shrimp accompanied by an array of toppings and hot flour tortillas. When you just can't decide which one your mouth is watering for make a duo or a trio combo of this not-so-typical dish. You may enjoy a tender USDA 8oz Grilled Steak or a 12oz New York Strip Steak grilled to perfection with a merlot butter, veggies, and garlic herb smashed potatoes.



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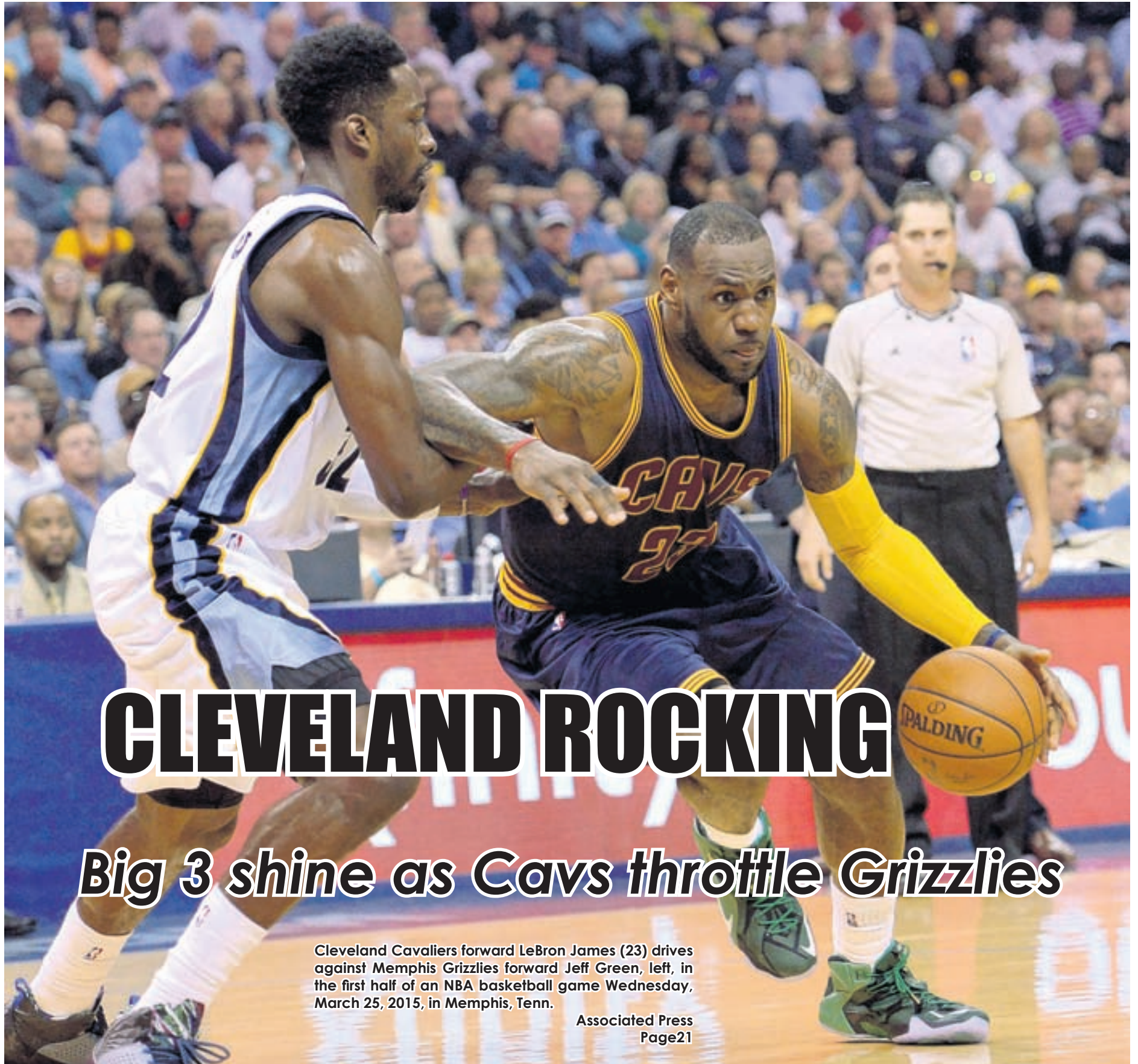


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Café either comfortably seated indoors or delightfully seated outside under our canopy. We create our own special ambiance every night with Aruba's best live bands playing just the right tunes at just the right volume to really relax and enjoy. Please have your concierge make reservations at 586-9966. ☐







# CLEVELAND ROCKING

## Big 3 shine as Cavs throttle Grizzlies

Cleveland Cavaliers forward LeBron James (23) drives against Memphis Grizzlies forward Jeff Green, left, in the first half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, March 25, 2015, in Memphis, Tenn.

Associated Press  
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## NHL Capsules

# Hemsky scores 2, Seguin gets SO winner as Stars beat Flames



Edmonton Oilers' Derek Roy (8) celebrates his goal, next to Colorado Avalanche's Alex Tanguay (40) during the third period of an NHL hockey game Wednesday, March 25, 2015, in Edmonton, Alberta.

Associated Press

**CALGARY, Alberta (AP)** — Ales Hemsky scored twice in regulation, Tyler Seguin had the only goal in the shootout as the Dallas Stars beat the Calgary Flames 4-3 Wednesday for their seventh win in eight games. Seguin got a shot past Karri Ramo in the first round of the shootout, and Stars

goalie Kari Lehtonen was perfect against Joe Colborne, Johnny Gaudreau and Sean Monahan to get the victory. Jamie Benn also scored for Dallas, which pulled six points behind Winnipeg for the second wild-card spot in the Western Conference. Derek Engelland got his

first two goals of the season, and Gaudreau also scored in regulation for Calgary. The Flames remained third in the Pacific Division, one point up on Los Angeles — which is outside of a playoff spot.

**FLYERS 4, BLACKHAWKS 1**  
PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Claude Giroux, Wayne

Simmonds, Ryan White and Michael Raffl scored goals to lead Philadelphia past Chicago.

Giroux had his 22nd goal for his first even-strength score at home this season. Steve Mason was stout again for the Flyers, finishing with 34 saves.

Andrew Shaw scored for the Blackhawks.

Flyers fans gave Chicago defenseman Kimmo Timonen a standing ovation during a video tribute for the returning defenseman who helped lead Philadelphia to the 2010 Stanley Cup final.

Timonen returned to Philadelphia for the first time since he was traded to Chicago in February for two draft picks.

### **OILERS 4, AVALANCHE 3**

EDMONTON, Alberta (AP) — Derek Roy scored the tiebreaking goal midway through the third period

and Edmonton recovered after giving up a three-goal lead.

Martin Marincin, Jordan Eberle and Taylor Hall all scored in the first 9:36 of the game for the Oilers, who have won two of their last three games. Ben Scrivens stopped 31 shots.

Jarome Iginla and Alex Tanguay scored in the second period, and Ryan O'Reilly tied it early in the third for the Avalanche, who have lost three in a row and are 10 points out of playoff spot with just nine games remaining.

Semyon Varlamov allowed three goals on the first seven shots he faced before getting pulled in favor of Reto Berra, who finished with 26 saves.

In other NHL games it was Dallas 4, Calgary 3, SO; Philadelphia 4, Chicago 1; and Edmonton 4, Colorado 3. □

## Judge lets ex-NHL player lawsuit over concussions continue

### **ST. PAUL, Minnesota (AP)**

— The NHL's motion to dismiss a class-action lawsuit brought by former players over concussion-related injuries has been largely rejected by a federal judge, allowing the claims to move forward. U.S. District Judge Susan Richard Nelson issued her order Wednesday. The plaintiffs in the case have been seeking unspecified financial damages and medical monitoring for neurological

disorders. Their stance is the league had the knowledge and resources to better prevent head trauma, failed to properly warn players of such risks and promoted violent play that led to their injuries.

Nelson wrote that the former players "adequately alleged that the NHL negligently or fraudulently omitted information about the dangers and risks of repeated head trauma," in this case. □



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## Charley Hoffman takes lead in wind-swept Texas Open

**TIM PRICE**

**Associated Press**

**SAN ANTONIO (AP)** — Charley Hoffman took advantage of calmer afternoon conditions to take the first-round lead in the wind-swept Texas Open, shooting a 5-under 67 on Thursday.

After wind gusts threatening 40 mph pummeled the morning starters, Hoffman faced steady 15 mph wind in the afternoon at TPC San Antonio. He had the lone bogey-free round, birdieing Nos. 2, 3, 9, 11 and 17. The winner last year in Mexico at the start of the wraparound season, Hoffman has eight top-10 finishes in nine appearances in San Antonio. He was second in 2011 and third in 2013. Aaron Baddeley was second after a 68.

The Australian had a remarkable birdie on the par-4 17th when he snap-hooked his drive deep into thick woods, went back to the tee and holed out from 336 yards.

Max Homa had a 69, and Phil Mickelson and Ryan Palmer

shot 70.

Mickelson, winless since the 2013 British Open, lost the clubhead off his 8-iron when it came flying off while he hit from a fairway bunker on the 12th hole.

With gusts reaching 38 mph early in the day, no one with a morning tee time managed to break par.

Only Matt Kuchar and Cameron Percy matched it, and conditions might have been worse if not for maintenance crews slithering hoses onto some of the greens to water them down.

The stroke average for the morning wave was 78.61 and the overall average was 75.9.

From the 69 players in the morning, 23 failed to break 80. Jim Furyk and Dustin Johnson managed to keep it in the 70s, but they had their struggles with the wind.

Furyk opened his day with a 52-foot birdie putt, but he shot 76. Johnson had a 78, his worst since shooting a first-round 80 before withdrawing last year

from the Houston Open.

U.S. Open champion Martin Kaymer had a two triple bogeys in an 82.

Defending champion Steven Bowditch opened with an 80.

Sam Burns, an 18-year-old high school senior from Shreveport, Louisiana, who earned a spot in the field by winning the Junior PGA Championship last summer, carded an 89 with a quadruple bogey at No. 9.

Hoffman took the lead when he drove near the collar of the 17th green, chipped up and made a 6-footer for birdie.

Graeme McDowell was one of three players from the morning wave who withdrew while shooting high numbers, citing injuries.

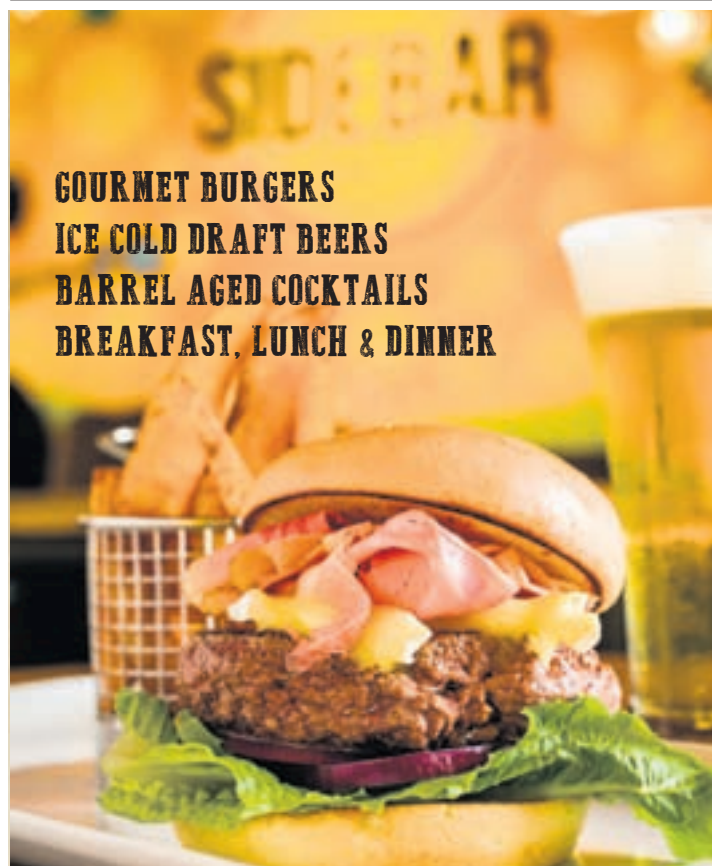
McDowell, the 2010 U.S. Open champion, said his left ankle and foot were bothering him when he pulled out after a 5-over 41 on his first nine. Sang Moon Bae (back) was 6 over through seven, and Colt Knost (thumb) had it at 9 over through eight with a quadruple bogey at No. 3. □



Charley Hoffman chips onto the fifteenth green during the first round of the Valero Texas Open golf tournament, Thursday, March 26, 2015, in San Antonio.

Associated Press





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This Oct. 9, 1997, file photo shows North Carolina basketball coach Dean Smith during a news conference where he announced his retirement, in Chapel Hill, N.C.

Associated Press

## Dean Smith's trust sends \$200 each to his lettered players

**CHAPEL HILL, North Carolina (AP)** — Dean Smith is still giving to his University of North Carolina players — even after his death.

Tim Breedlove, the Charlotte-based trustee of the trust that bears the late coach's name, said on Thursday that letters were sent this month to each of the players who lettered for Smith's teams — about 180 in all.

The letter says Smith directed that following his death, each letterman was to be sent a \$200 check with the message, "Enjoy a dinner out compliments of Coach Dean Smith."

The checks were attached to the letters.

The Basketball Hall of Fame coach died on Feb. 7 at age 83, and a memorial service two weeks later at the campus arena that bears his name drew about 10,000 people, with lines snaking around the building more than an hour before fans could enter. It drew a list of attendees that included current UNC coach and Smith disciple Roy Williams, and former players Phil Ford, Brad Daugherty and Antawn Jamison.

Upon Smith's death, tributes flowed in from across col-

lege basketball: Pregame moments of silence were held at venues where UNC wasn't even playing. Miami coach Jim Larranaga wore a Carolina blue-shaded tie to honor him, and North Carolina ran Smith's famed "Four Corners" offense — and eventually scoring out of it — to open a game against Georgia Tech.

Smith spent 36 seasons with UNC's Tar Heels, and led them to national championships in 1982 and 1993 before retiring in 1997 with 897 career victories, the most in Division I history at the time. □

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## NBA Capsules

# Irving scores 24 to lead Cavs past Grizzlies 111-89



Cleveland Cavaliers forward Kevin Love (0) sets a pick against Memphis Grizzlies guard Mike Conley, center, as Cavaliers guard Kyrie Irving drives toward the basket in the first half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, March 25, 2015, in Memphis, Tenn. **Associated Press**

### The Associated Press

#### MEMPHIS, Tennessee (AP)

— Kyrie Irving scored 24 points, and Kevin Love added 22 points and 10 rebounds as the Cleveland Cavaliers rolled to a 111-89 victory over the Memphis Grizzlies on Wednesday.

LeBron James finished with 20 points, Timofey Mozgov added 14 and J.R. Smith 13 to help Cleveland win its fourth straight and eighth in nine. Cleveland shot 51 percent and was 14 of 34 from 3-point range.

Marc Gasol led Memphis with 18 points, while Beno Udrih had 15.

Cleveland controlled the boards with a 49-32 advantage in rebounds, which offset the Cavaliers' 18 turnovers, including five each by Love and Irving.

The game completely got away from Memphis in the third when Cleveland connected on 11 of its first 13 shots in the quarter, including 3 of 4 from 3-point range.

#### ROCKETS 95, PELICANS 93

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — James Harden had 25 points and 10 assists, and Dwight Howard had seven rebounds and a block on Anthony Davis in his return from a two-month absence as Houston handed New Orleans its fourth straight loss.

Davis had 24 points and 14 rebounds for the Pelicans,

but uncharacteristically missed eight free throws, including one that could have pulled New Orleans to 94-93 with 7 seconds left. The Pelicans still had a chance to set up a trying 3-pointer after Harden missed a free throw with 3.3 seconds left, but Corey Brewer intentionally fouled Eric Gordon on the inbounds pass to force free throws. Gordon made the first and purposely missed the second in hopes for a tying putback that never materialized.

#### SPURS 130, THUNDER 91

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Tony Parker had 21 points and six assists as San Antonio stopped Oklahoma City's four-game winning streak. Boris Diaw scored 19 points, and Tim Duncan had 16, and Kawhi Leonard 14 points in the Spurs' highest scoring game of the season. They have won 11 of 13.

Thunder star Russell Westbrook was held to 16 points on 5-for-16 shooting. He left midway through the third quarter with the Spurs leading by 30. Westbrook averaged 32.7 points, 11.2 assists and 9.6 rebounds in his previous 13 games.

#### HAWKS 95, Magic 83

ORLANDO, Florida (AP) — Paul Millsap had 25 points and 11 rebounds as Atlanta ended a three-game losing streak with a win

over Orlando.

Jeff Teague added 16 points, despite spraining his left ankle in the first quarter. The Hawks trailed by 13 in the first half, but outscored the Magic 27-12 in the fourth quarter.

Elfrid Payton led the Magic with 19 points and nine rebounds. Victor Oladipo and Nik Vucevic added 16 points apiece.

Orlando had just five turnovers in the first half, but finished the night with 17.

The Magic lost their second straight and have dropped eight of their last nine.

#### BULLS 116, RAPTORS 103

TORONTO (AP) — Jimmy Butler scored 23 points and Pau Gasol had 18 as Chicago beat Toronto.

Tony Snell scored 17 points to help the Bulls move 1 1/2 games ahead of the Raptors for third place in the Eastern Conference. Aaron Brooks had 16 points, and Nikola Mirotic finished with 15.

Toronto has dropped three of four. It has lost five in a row to Chicago.

Greivis Vasquez had 22 points for the Raptors, and DeMar DeRozan added 20. Vasquez also matched a career high with six 3-pointers.

#### CLIPPERS 111, KNICKS 80

NEW YORK (AP) — DeAndre Jordan raised the NBA's best shooting percentage above 71 percent by making all seven shots and scoring 14 points, as Los Angeles pounded New York.

Shooting all night from either right at or above the rim — and once right on top of Jason Smith — Jordan hiked his season average to .713, which would be second only to Wilt Chamberlain's .727 in 1972-73.

Chris Paul added 11 points and 16 assists for the Clippers. They won their fifth straight and improved the fourth-best record in the Western Conference to 47-25. Austin Rivers scored 21 points in 19 minutes.

Rookie Cleanthony Early had a season-high 18 points for the Knicks. They lost their fifth straight to

drop to 14-58 and move a loss away from matching the franchise record.

#### KINGS 108, SUNS 99

PHOENIX (AP) — DeMarcus Cousins scored 24 points, all but four in the first three quarters, and had 11 rebounds to help Sacramento beat Phoenix. Cousins also had three assists, two steals and a block, and Rudy Gay scored 14 points for the Kings. They have

won four straight. Markieff Morris scored 24 points, and Eric Bledsoe and Marcus Morris added 19 each for the Suns. Phoenix squandered an opportunity to make up a game on eighth-place Oklahoma City in the Western Conference. The Thunder were routed at San Antonio. Phoenix trails Oklahoma City by three games for the West's final playoff spot. □

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SAT, SUN & HOL 3:00 | 5:10  
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# Del Potro loses 1st-round match at Miami Open

STEVEN WINE

AP Sports Writer

KEY BISCAYNE, Fla. (AP)

— Juan Martin del Potro's latest comeback from an injury is off to a slow start, and he's OK with that.

Playing his first match since Jan. 15, del Potro lost Thursday to Vasek Pospisil in the first round of the Miami Open, 6-4, 7-6 (7).

"I don't feel frustrated," del Potro said. "I have to take the positive things on my comeback. The score doesn't matter for now."

Del Potro had been sidelined with a lingering left wrist injury. The 2009 U.S. Open champion had wrist surgery a year ago and played in just four tournaments in 2014, and his ranking has fallen to No. 616.

Venus Williams began her 16th appearance at Key Biscayne by beating qualifier Urszula Radwanska 6-3, 6-2. Radwanska's sister Agnieszka won, as did former No. 1 Caroline Wozniacki.

Del Potro's rustiness showed in the second set, to the disappointment of a partisan stadium crowd rooting for the Argentine. He served at 5-4 and was broken. He double-faulted holding a set point, lost another set point and double-faulted again on the next-to-last point.

Del Potro converted only one of six break-point chances and hit just nine winners to 36 for Pospisil, a Canadian ranked 60th.

"I didn't serve well in the special moments," del Potro said. "But now I'm OK. Just playing the tournament and being here means a lot for me."

Del Potro said he felt fine physically after the match. He said his wrist is not yet 100 percent, but it's improving week by week.

"It doesn't matter how long it takes me to be at the top again," he said. "I just wanted to play tennis and without pain."

Williams, seeded 16th, lost serve three times and committed 21 unforced errors but still advanced in barely an hour. The typically windy weather on the island required an adjust-



Juan Martin del Potro, of Argentina, reacts after losing a point against Vasek Pospisil, of Canada, during their match at the Miami Open tennis tournament in Key Biscayne, Fla., Thursday, March 26, 2015. Associated Press

ment, she said.

"Those were really challenging conditions," she said. "The wind literally blew so many balls in that were going out."

Williams improved to 55-13 at Key Biscayne, where she won titles in 1998, 1999 and 2001.

"Been down here a little over forever," said Williams, who lives 90 minutes up I-95 in Palm Beach Gardens. "I love playing down here."

Aside from Williams, American women went 0-3, with Madison Brengle, Christina McHale and Varvara Lepchenko losing. □

## Mirim Lee leads LPGA Tour's Kia Classic

CARLSBAD, Calif. (AP) —

Mirim Lee birdied all four par-5 holes and finished with a bogey-free 7-under 65 on Thursday to take the first-round lead in the Kia Classic.

Lee took the outright lead with an 8-foot putt on the par-5 fifth — her 14th hole in her afternoon round at Aviara — and hit a wedge to 3 feet to set up her final birdie on the par-5 eighth. The 24-year-old South Ko-

rean player won LPGA Tour events last year in Michigan and China.

Yani Tseng, winless in 70 starts since her victory in the 2012 event at nearby La Costa, had a 66.

Tseng finished with a 4-foot birdie putt on the par-4 18th after hitting a 150-yard shot from near a fairway bunker with the ball well above her feet. The Taiwanese player birdied Nos. 7-9, made a 20-foot eagle putt from the

fringe on the par-5 10th, dropped a stroke on the par-4 14th when she missed a 3-foot par putt and rebounded with a 3-foot birdie putt on the par-4 16th.

Top-ranked Lydia Ko was two strokes back at 67 along with Karrie Webb, Cristie Kerr and China's Lin Xiyu. The 17-year-old Ko has 10 straight top-10 finishes and has broken par in her last 25 LPGA Tour rounds and 28 worldwide. □



## 'American Idol'-like talent competition app launches

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — For anyone who's ever dreamed of being on "American Idol" or "The Voice" as a performer or judge, a new app seeks to make their fantasy come true.

The talent competition app "Chosen" from David Hyman, the former CEO of Beats Music, is launching Thursday for invitees on Apple devices.

"We designed 'Chosen' for tastemakers, up-and-coming talent and the more than 1 billion fans of online music videos, traditional reality competition TV shows and mobile gaming," said Hyman in a statement.

In the app's "karaoke" and "lip sync" modes, performers can show off their range from a selection of 75 different tunes, while the "perform now" mode allows entertainers of any

kind to showcase any skills, from hip-hop dancing to violin playing.

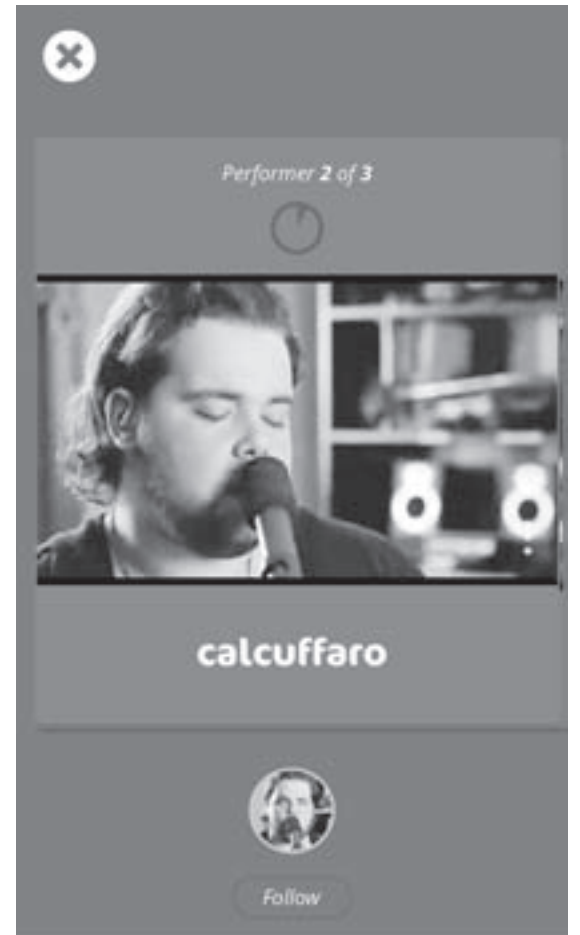
The uploaded performances can be voted on by fellow users.

The winner will be announced in June and be given a chance to perform on stage at the Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival in Manchester, Tennessee.

Hyman hopes "Chosen" isn't like other star searches.

"On 'Chosen,' fans and performers are able to get in the game in a way that simply isn't possible while passively watching TV shows like 'American Idol' and 'The Voice,' endlessly surfing online videos," said Hyman.

"In addition to being a powerful performance platform, 'Chosen' is a completely new way for fans to interact and engage with music and video content." □



This image provided by Chosen shows a screenshot of a performance from the talent competition app, "Chosen." The former CEO of Beats Music, David Hyman, is behind the new app, which debuts Thursday, March 26, 2015, for invitees on Apple devices.

Associated Press

## New Samsung, HTC phones coming April 10 in U.S.



In this Feb. 23, 2015, file photo, two new Samsung phones, Galaxy S6, top left, and Galaxy S6 Edge, to right, are on display with choice of color selections at a special media preview in New York. Orders for Samsung's Galaxy S 6 phones start Saturday, March 28, 2015, with delivery around April 10.

**NEW YORK (AP)** — New phones from Samsung and HTC will be available in U.S. stores starting April 10.

Advance orders for the new HTC One begin Friday, and those customers might

receive their phones before April 10. Orders for Samsung's Galaxy S6 phones start Friday as well, with delivery expected around April 10.

Phone sizes won't change.

HTC is largely keeping the same design, but improving the camera and personalizing the home screen based on your location.

It also promises to replace the phone once if you

smash or crack it. Samsung is swapping its plastic back cover for more stylish metal and glass to better compete with the iPhone.

It also improved the camera and software interface.

Prices will vary by carrier. No-contract versions generally start at about \$650, in line with the iPhone and other high-end devices.

At AT&T, prices for the Galaxy S6 start at \$685, paid in installments.

A higher-end Edge model, with a display that curves on the both sides, starts at \$815.

The no-contract price for the HTC One is \$709.

T-Mobile's prices work out to \$680 for the S6, \$780 for the S6 Edge and \$650 for the HTC One.

Sprint will lease the S6 phone for free and the S6 Edge for \$5 a month to those opting for an \$80-a-month Unlimited Plus plan. After two years, though, customers must pay the balance or continue a leasing plan, which costs \$20 a month for the S 6 and \$25 for the Edge.

Without a lease, customers pay \$650 for the S6 through Sprint's Boost Mobile pre-paid service. Sprint is leasing the HTC One phone for \$20 a month. □

Associated Press



# US unemployment benefit filings tumbled last week

**JOSH BOAK**

**AP Economics Writer**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Fewer people sought U.S. unemployment benefits last week, evidence that strong hiring should continue despite signs of slower economic growth at the start of 2015.

The Labor Department said Thursday that weekly applications for jobless aid fell 9,000 to a seasonally adjusted 282,000. The decrease suggests that a recent slowdown in manufactur-

ing, housing starts and retail sales have not trickled into the job market, a possible indication that economic growth will rebound after a harsh winter.

The four-week average, a less volatile measure, tumbled 7,750 to 297,000. Over the past 12 months, the average has dipped roughly 7 percent.

Applications are a proxy for layoffs. The relatively low average shows that employers are holding onto workers and may increase

hiring. Applications below 300,000 are generally consistent with solid monthly job gains.

The economy has been struck by some setbacks during a frigid February. Factories cranked out fewer long-lasting goods, the Commerce Department reported Wednesday.

Builders broke ground on fewer homes last month, while retail spending has fallen.

Those reports indicate that growth will be dramatically

lower than its annual average of 2.2 percent during the final three months of last year, which was already a decrease from growth averaging more than 4 percent in the middle of 2014. The Atlanta Federal Reserve forecasts that first-quarter growth will be at an annualized rate of 0.2 percent. Private firm Macroeconomic Advisers estimated somewhat more optimistically on Tuesday growth of 1.4 percent.

Still, as layoffs have dipped,

job growth has soared. In each of the past 12 months, employers have added at least 200,000 jobs. The gains totaled 295,000 in February. The job growth has slashed the unemployment rate to 5.5 percent from 6.7 percent a year ago.

However, wages have yet to rise significantly, limiting the benefits to the overall economy from the additional jobs. Average hourly wages have climbed just 2 percent over the past 12 months. □

# US stocks fall for a 4th straight day; price of oil surges

**KEN SWEET**

**AP Business Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** A see-saw day for U.S. stocks ended with slight losses on Thursday, giving the market its fourth drop in a row.

Edgy investors continue to monitor violence in the Middle East and the rapid ascent of the U.S. dollar, which is causing companies to pull back their profit forecasts for the year.

After hitting record highs earlier this month, stocks have been steadily declining this week. Strategists and traders said the strong dollar, geopolitical tensions and a market that is already expensive have given investors little impetus to buy in recent days.

"We have been due for a pullback," said Brad Sorensen of the Schwab Center for Financial Research. "The markets have been

focused on the Fed (potentially raising interest rates) and the impact of a stron-

The Standard & Poor's 500 index lost 4.90 points, or 0.2 percent, to 2,056.15 and



**Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. A see-saw day for U.S. stocks ended with slight losses on Thursday, giving the market its fourth drop in a row.**

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

ger dollar."

The Dow Jones industrial average lost 40.31 points, or 0.2 percent, to 17,678.23.

the Nasdaq composite fell 13.16 points, or 0.3 percent, to 4,863.36.

The market has fallen every

day this week, bringing the S&P 500 index and the Dow down 2.5 percent each and erasing their gains for the year. The Nasdaq composite has dropped even more this week, 3.2 percent, as traders targeted high-flying biotech companies for heavy selling. The Nasdaq is still up 2.7 percent for the year.

Most of the action Thursday was in energy markets. The price of oil rose sharply as mounting tensions in Yemen got traders worried that the flow of crude from the Persian Gulf region could be disrupted. Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states launched strikes on military installations in Yemen in an effort to oust Shiite rebels that forced the country's embattled president to flee.

U.S. crude rose \$2.22, or 4.5 percent, to close at \$51.43

a barrel in New York. U.S. crude oil has jumped 17 percent since hitting a low of \$43.96 a barrel a week ago. It was the first time the benchmark U.S. oil contract closed at \$50 or higher since March 9.

Brent crude, a benchmark for international oils used by many U.S. refineries, rose \$2.71, or 4.8 percent, to close at \$59.19 a barrel in London. "The conflict has the potential to act as a drag on oil supplies as most oil tankers from Arab producers must pass by the Yemen coastline in order to get through the Red Sea and Suez Canal," said Craig Erlam, senior market analyst at OANDA.

The rise in oil was not enough to lift battered energy stocks. The energy sector in the S&P 500 index ended the day down 0.2 percent. □

# Bank of America CEO took 7 percent pay cut in 2014

**MICHAEL CORKERY**

**© 2015 New York Times**

Bank of America's chief executive, Brian T. Moynihan, took a 7 percent pay cut in 2014, as the giant bank faced mounting legal costs related to government investigations into the sale of mortgage investments leading up to the financial crisis.

Moynihan was awarded \$13 million in stock and cash last year, according to the bank's proxy statement released Thursday. That was down from the

\$14 million he received in 2013.

And again, the head of the firm's investment bank, Thomas K. Montag, was paid more than his boss. Montag was awarded \$14 million in compensation, down from \$15.5 million in 2013.

Last year was challenging for Bank of America and many of its Wall Street peers, as the banks settled years-long investigations with the Justice Department over shoddy mortgage-backed securities in

the lead up to the financial crisis.

In August, Bank of America agreed to a \$16.65 billion settlement with federal prosecutors to end inquiries into a mortgage cases that largely centered on the conduct of its Countrywide Financial and Merrill Lynch units. That price tag, which at the time was the largest settlement in corporate history, weighed on the bank's profits last year, although the deal represented the last big legal issue stemming from the fi-

nancial crisis.

Perhaps as big a challenge for Bank of America last year was how to increase its revenue amid low interest rates and rising regulatory costs. With those pressures showing no signs of abating, some investors fear that the near-term future for Bank of America and other large banks looks rocky.

Still, Bank of America's board gave a ringing endorsement of Moynihan's leadership by granting him the combined role of chief

executive and chairman last year.

In explaining the rationale for the move, the bank's board said Moynihan had "rebuilt capital and liquidity, streamlined and simplified its operations, reduced the scope of activities by exiting non-core businesses and products, stabilized performance, increased the return of capital to stockholders, settled its most significant legacy mortgage-related litigation matters, and reduced expenses." □



## Why Jeb Bush Might Lose



ROSS DOUTHAT  
© 2015 New York Times

If you're keeping score during the endless 2016 preseason, this was a pretty good week for Jeb Bush.

First, he watched Scott Walker, currently his main competitor for the Republican front-runner slot, stumble through another not-ready-for-prime-time moment, first hiring a well-liked young consultant named Liz Mair and then sacking her one day later because it turned out that she had tweeted intemperately about the sacred state of Iowa.

Second, he survived Andrew Ferguson.

Ferguson is a brilliant essayist and reporter for the Weekly Standard, and lately he has been an angel of death for Republican presidential hopefuls. During the last presidential preseason, he profiled Haley Barbour of Mississippi and Mitch Daniels of Indiana, and both governors lived to regret it. Barbour let slip what sounded like praise for the civil rights-era White Citizens' Council in his native Yazoo City; Daniels told Ferguson that the country needed a "truce" on social issues. Not coincidentally, neither man ended up even mounting a presidential bid.

In 2013, a Ferguson profile of Ted Cruz included a devastating section in which the journalist, trapped in cars and green rooms with his subject, realizes that Cruz only speaks in stump speeches, and won't stop giving them. Then, just last month, Ferguson decided that three 2016 hopefuls didn't even deserve full profiles and filleted the ambitions of Chris Christie, Rand Paul and Mike Huckabee in a single ruthless piece.

But his Jeb profile, on the cover of the latest Standard, may actually do its subject political good.

Oh, there are digs at the Bush family courtiers pining for a chance to work for "45." But the candidate himself comes off very favorably. More important, he comes off the way he needs Republican primary voters to eventually see him - as a politician who's much more authentically conservative than his centrist image and who has both the record and the scars to prove it.

Were I in charge of conservative outreach for the Bush campaign, I would be blast-emailing the profile to doubtful right-wing activists, with "Jeb: He's on Your Side" in the subject line (or "Jeb: The Anti-Romney").

But I wouldn't fool myself with the notion that Jeb's biggest problem in the primary season is his policy positions. His

stances on immigration and Common Core will hurt him with conservatives, and his record in Florida will help him, but his biggest problem right now is identification, not ideology. There just aren't that many Republican voters who want to vote for a dynastic heir in 2016, and it isn't clear yet if they'll decide that they ought to vote for Bush in spite of that reluctance.

Voting for president is a political act, but it's also a relational one. As the presidency increasingly dominates our politics, people want a nominee who will somehow personally represent all the virtues that they associate with their country, their political coalition and their worldview. They want an archetype, an inspiration, a figure who can somehow personify liberalism, or conservatism, or America itself.

Among Republican voters, everything that's appealing about a figure like Ben Carson - or, in a different way, Sarah Palin before him - is explained by this desire.

But at the same time, voters are more responsible than polling swings sometimes suggest. They know (or enough of them know) that in the end they ought to support someone who actually has a chance of being elected president and effectively governing the country. And when the tension between "want" and "ought" can't be resolved as neatly as it was by Ronald Reagan in 1980 and the vintage Barack Obama in 2008, the side of "ought" almost always wins.

That's why there hasn't been a real no-hope nominee in either party since George McGovern in 1972. That's why Mitt Romney, unloved and unwanted, was still the Republican pick in 2012. And that's why if Jeb could just run against, say, Carson, Huckabee and Cruz, it wouldn't matter that voters don't want to be represented by another scion of the Bush dynasty. In the end, they wouldn't really have a choice.

But right now, in Walker and Marco Rubio, Bush faces two opponents whose backgrounds and identities - the working-class slayer of unions, the self-made immigrant's son - match the way Republican voters want to think about their party in a way that a silver-spoon politician, whatever his record, never will. And notwithstanding Walker's recent stumbles, neither he nor Rubio obviously fails the "ought" test, since it's possible to imagine either man doing better than Bush against Hillary Clinton in a general election. That doesn't mean either can overcome Jeb's institutional advantages. But he needs them to flounder a bit and to look unready; failing that, he needs to find a way to show them up.

Because otherwise, Rubio or Walker might start to convince Republican voters that this time, how they want to vote is also how they should. □



## What's New, Pussycat? Meerkat!



MAUREEN DOWD  
© 2015 New York Times

AUSTIN, Texas - Pity the poor cat.

Somehow that creature of infinite detachment emerged as the symbol of incessant attachment here at South by Southwest.

In this festival of interactivity, connectivity, sharing and Tinder-ing, the two big stars were Grumpy Cat, who groggily greeted an endless stream of fans, and Meerkat, the live-streaming video app pounced on by presidential candidates eager to seem hip. (The meerkat is actually from the monogoose family.)

Animal shelters hosted "yappy hours" with free beer, and Friskies cat food set up the Haus of Bacon, where Internet cat stars took photos with groupies. There was even an attempt to rebrand cats to be less snobby and more in tune with the huggy Internet age.

Jackson Galaxy, the tattooed, pierced, catwhispering host of "My Cat From Hell," on Animal Planet, held a standing-room-only session called "CATastrophe: Good, Bad and Ugly of Internet Cats."

He advised the crowd - some wearing orange cat ears - that, rather than calling cats "aloof," it might be better to describe them as "freethinkers," "Zen masters" and "Buddhists." Galaxy's attempt to warm up the image of cats was undercut by research suggesting that the only species that seems to show no regret or forgiveness after spats are cats.

"I would hesitate to call cats domestic animals," he told me, adding that he liked the fact that they are not "slavish," but rather "no compromise" creatures who "kill stuff really well."

The focus on felines made me wish I could roam the festival with Tobermory, the barbed British cat with the "velvet tread and studied unconcern" from the Saki short story. In the 1911 yarn, a member of Lady Blemley's house party teaches Tobermory, or Toby for short, to talk. Indifferent to the feelings of humans, Toby is brutally honest, exposing the guests' dalliances, deceptions and foibles. I needed someone like Toby to help me cut through the verbal clutter and Panglossian spin in a world where celebrities are "influencers," people are "users," news is "content," "platforms" are not shoes, the "Deep Web" is no place for Charlotte, and virtual reality trumps plain old reality. Toby would glide coolly past the drones in the Robot Petting Zoo. But he would make quick work of Yik Yak co-founders Tyler Droll and Brooks Buffington, former frat brothers wearing matching turquoise Yik Yak socks for their interview on stage. They tried to push back against criticism that their anonymous, location-based social app used by students is a magnet for crude sexual hazing, bomb threats and bullying: the intimidating "Wild West of anonymous social apps," as a law professor put it in a Times article. Droll and Buffington said they wanted to create a site that would offer "a level playing field for content," no matter your race, gender, ethnicity or popularity. They talked about how it could provide lifesaving help on donation drives and showed a sample of innocent "yaks." In one, a lost girl was escorted back to her building; in another, redheads were praised as awesome.

"Do you think we're so feeble-minded that we believe this flimflam about Yik Yak?" Toby would say serenely. "Look at any anonymous comments section online. Even I shudder, and I have claws and highly developed feral instincts."

At a Marie Claire dinner for "Veep" at The Spotify House, I asked Tyler Winklevoss, who is developing a stock market for Bitcoin with his twin brother, to explain the invisible currency. "Bitcoin is Internet money," he said. "It's a value transfer protocol."

When I asked about the nefari-

ous Bitcoin transactions in the Internet netherworld, Winklevoss protested: "People use cash every second of the day to do illegal things. Bitcoin is traceable and cash is anonymous."

If Toby deigned to accept the Marie Claire invitation, he no doubt would interpolate: "Bitcoin more transparent? Balderdash! We don't even know who invented it. It's Disney dollars for tech nerds."

Then there was my interview with Alex Winter, who graduated from playing Bill in "Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure" to create an Epix documentary about the Darknet, where the Silk Road marketplace operated with Bitcoin, called "The Deep Web."

"It's like looking under the hood of the Internet," Winter said, arguing that the Deep Web is "largely used for good" by government agencies, dissidents and journalists.

But Toby would certainly beg to differ, scoffing, "It's a first-rate bazaar for drug dealers, child pornography peddlers, illegal arms salesman and Bitcoin burglars."

If I dragged Toby to the panel with Dan Rather and the former Obama adviser Dan Pfeiffer, he would twitch at the exuberance of Pfeiffer predicting a Meerkatting "revolution" in coverage. And Toby would put his paws together, as many in the audience did, when Rather advised prudence during this tech "orgy of delight" and insisted that journalists will always be needed to separate the "brass tacks from the bull shine."

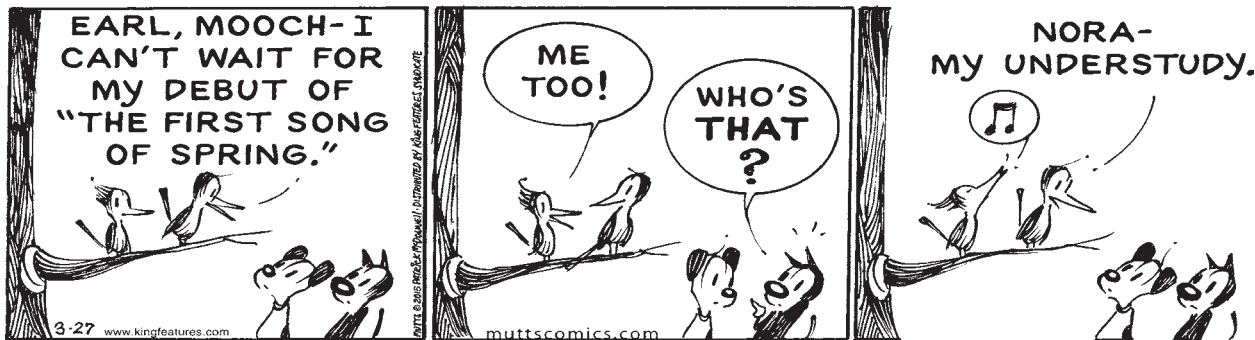
Toby would sniff that South by Southwest was more social than media and prowl off to catch up with Judd Apatow.

Not one to pussyfoot, Toby would offer his biting commentary as he left: "People at South By are not aiming higher anymore. They are aiming niche. They aren't looking to do anything larger than themselves. They are aiming to monetize eyeballs in a petty way. They are making even less meaningful social apps and not creating things that are either blazingly new or deeply important to our lives or transformative to society. It's not inspiring to aggregate 100,000 tweets."

Meow. □



## Mutts



## 6 Chix



## Blondie



## Mother Goose & Grimm



## Baby Blues



## Zits



## Conceptis Sudoku

					9		2	
	8		7		1	6	4	
	3				5			
8			1			5		7
1		3			8			6
			5				6	
	1	4	2		6		8	
	7		3					

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

3/27

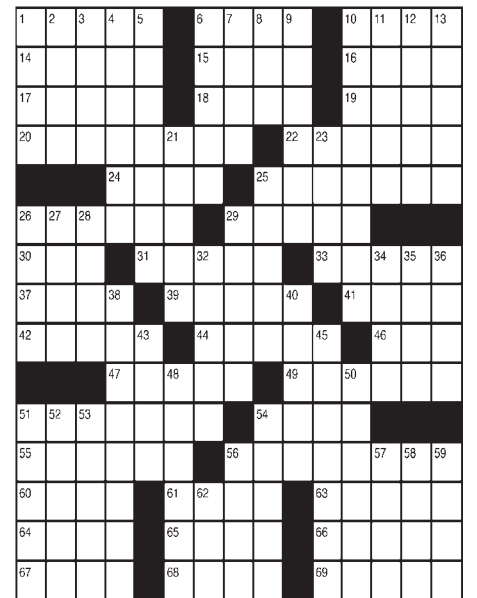
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

7	6	2	8	3	5	4	1	9
9	4	1	2	6	7	5	3	8
3	8	5	1	9	4	6	7	2
8	9	4	5	2	1	7	6	3
1	5	6	3	7	8	9	2	4
2	7	3	6	4	9	8	5	1
4	3	8	7	1	6	2	9	5
5	1	7	9	8	2	3	4	6
6	2	9	4	5	3	1	8	7

## ACROSS

- Alter to make fit
- Close noisily
- Skin irritation
- Actress Berry
- Tiny bit
- Man or boy
- Pipe \_\_\_; church instrument
- Is dishonest
- Incite by poking
- Piece of silverware
- "See ya!"
- Farrow & Sara
- Ardent fan
- Responses to corny jokes
- High-powered surgical beam
- Goal; objective
- Tendon
- Gingrich's namesakes
- Recipe verb
- Leo, Virgo, Pisces, etc.
- Critically urgent
- \_\_\_ four; fancy pastry
- Throws
- Reasonable bedtime
- Cuba's Castro
- Went quickly
- Not as large
- Arrived
- Free-for-alls
- Live together no longer
- West of "Batman"
- Singer \_\_\_ James
- Leg bone
- Give a hoot
- Sorority letters
- Marsh grasses
- J-O connection
- Sort; variety
- Valuable thing



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

3/27/15

## Thursday's Puzzle Solved

3	Seaweed	48	Gobi or Mojave	54	Discontinue
4	Fluid part of the blood	50	World ___; baseball season finale	56	Word in a red octagon
5	Bowling	51	Noisy kiss	57	Burrows and Beame
6	Fodder towers	52	Military decoration	58	Laundry soap
7	Cut of pork	53	Bedside awakener	59	Orient
8	Dined			62	"...Hallowed be ___ name..."
9	Tumors				
10	Beseeched				
11	Fortune-teller's deck of cards				
12	Exact duplicate				
13	Row of shrubs				
21	Desert refuge				
23	Microwave, e.g.				
25	Early mornings				
26	Inhale suddenly				
27	Ceremony				
28	Leave out				
29	Not forbidden				
32	More pleasant				
34	___-it; hip				
35	Pine or palm				
36	Transmit				
38	Infantry				
40	Purse handle				
43	Scrabble piece				
45	Large island of Indonesia				

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3/27/15



## Nigeria

Continued from Page 9

"We are not going to risk the lives of our staff," she said. "Preparations are in top gear for the elections" at scores of temporary polling stations set up by the commission in Yola, a city of 300,000 people that now holds as many refugees.

For months Nigerian troops had been on the retreat, fleeing Boko Haram attacks as the insurgents seized territory the size of Belgium and declared an Islamic caliphate on the lines of the Islamic State group to which it recently pledged allegiance. Troops were being sent into battle with just 30 rounds of ammunition, often fleeing because they ran out of bullets, according to John Campbell, a former U.S. ambassador to Nigeria now with the Council on Foreign Relations.

Omeri attributed the new successes to the acquisition of arms after many difficulties.

"What we never had, we now have ... We have drones, we have aircraft, we have APCs (armored personnel carriers) and so on, and we are getting to where we should be to rebuild the armed forces, returning it to its glory," Omeri said Wednesday in an interview with The Associated Press. □

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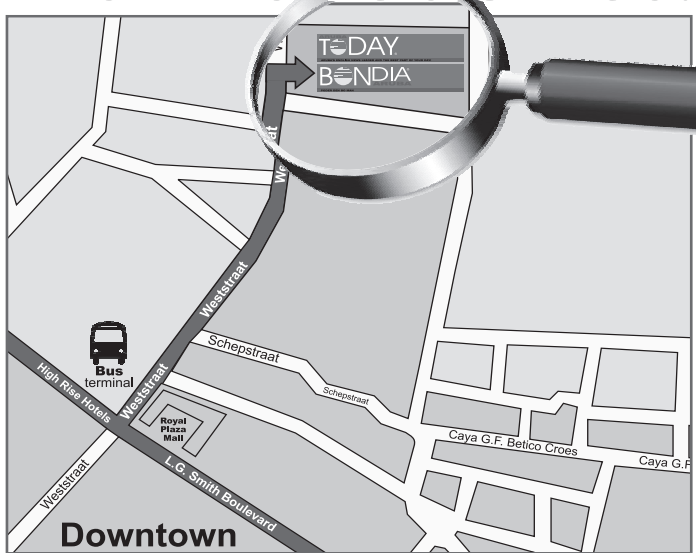
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24/7

## 2 exotic termites find love in U.S., worrying researchers

**JENNIFER KAY**  
**Associated Press**

**MIAMI (AP)** — Two particularly hungry, exotic termite species apparently have found love halfway around the world and, as with so many other Florida hook-ups, the results are disturbing.

Asian and Formosan subterranean termites are two of the most destructive termite species in the world, responsible for much of the estimated \$40 billion in economic losses attributed to termites annually. Their habitat ranges overlap in lush South Florida, already home to a daunting number of invasive plant and animal species thriving where they should not. Each termite invaded Florida, probably through cargo shipments, several decades ago, but experts believed the colonies didn't mingle because their aboveground mating swarms launched in different months.

That is, until University of Florida researcher Thomas Chouvenc noticed something unusual about the termite swarms in his Florida neighborhood two years ago.

The two species were flying around looking for mates at the same time — and they were giving each other that look.

The research is preliminary and leaves many questions unanswered, but the idea



This undated photo provided by Thomas Chouvenc of the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), shows young hybrid termite offspring eight months after the light-colored female Formosan termite, bottom right, mated with the darker male Asian termite, bottom left, in Florida.

**Associated Press**

of a hybrid termite carrying the destructive capabilities of two invasive species worries experts.

"That's big news," said Matthew Messenger, an entomologist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"They're two bad ones, too."

Chouvenc is the lead author of a study published Wednesday in the journal PLOS ONE detailing observations of Asian and Formosan termite swarms in

downtown Fort Lauderdale and then in a lab at UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

In the field, including Chouvenc's own yard, researchers documented the two species swarming at the

same time and in the same places. The same behavior was documented again last year, and Chouvenc said he's seeing again this spring.

"What we didn't expect to see was when they're in the same place at the same time, we saw the male Asian subterranean termites looking for the female Formosan termites in the field," Chouvenc said.

"When we put them in vials and brought them back to the lab, to our biggest surprise they started laying eggs and the eggs started growing."

The resulting "hybrid" colony in the lab grew more vigorously than colonies produced by either species alone, researchers said. Genetic analysis confirmed they were looking at a hybrid species.

The Formosan termites originated in China but now are established throughout the U.S. Southeast and blamed for roughly \$300 million in property damage each year in New Orleans alone. Asian termites normally found in tropical southeastern Asia have spread to Brazil, the Caribbean and South Florida.

Asian termites aren't expected to spread farther north in the U.S. than South Florida because they don't tolerate colder weather, but a hybrid might be able to thrive in a greater range than either species alone. □

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## 'Fifty Shades' director Taylor-Johnson bows out of franchise

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Sam Taylor-Johnson will not be returning to direct the sequels to "Fifty Shades of Grey," she announced Wednesday night.

"Directing 'Fifty Shades of Grey' has been an intense and incredible journey for which I am hugely grateful," she said in a statement to industry site Deadline in which she thanked Universal Pictures.

Taylor-Johnson's \$40 million adaptation of author E L James' erotic novel has grossed a staggering \$558 million worldwide in just six weeks in theaters, but even before the film debuted, rumors circulated that she would not likely be the person ushering "Fifty Shades Darker" and "Fifty Shades Freed" to the big screen. Stars Dakota Johnson and Jamie Dornan are expected to return for both sequels, which have yet to be officially announced.

While it is nothing new for directors to exit franchises after the first film — "Twilight," "The Hunger Games," and "Divergent" all made directing changes between their first and second installments — Taylor-Johnson and James' fraught on-set relationship was widely reported.

Earlier this year, James, also a producer on the film, alluded to their conflicts, telling The Associated Press that she "had to fight



In this Feb. 6, 2015 file photo, director Sam Taylor-Johnson, left, and Aaron Taylor-Johnson attend a special fan screening of "Fifty Shades of Grey" hosted by The Today Show at the Ziegfeld Theatre, in New York. Associated Press

for a lot of things really hard," which included a disagreement over the last line of the film.

Still, in her statement, Taylor-Johnson made sure to note the

"close and lasting relationships" she formed with the cast, producers, crew and "most especially, with Dakota and Jamie."

She added: "I wish nothing but

success to whosoever takes on the exciting challenges of films two and three."

A representative for Universal Pictures had no comment. □



In this March 15, 2011 file photo, Celine Dion reacts to the audience during her opening night performance at Caesar's Palace, in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

## Celine Dion returns to Caesars Palace stage in August

**LAS VEGAS (AP)** — Celine Dion is returning to The Colosseum stage at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas starting Aug. 27 after a year-long hiatus to care for her husband, allow her inflamed throat muscles to heal and spend time with her three children. Caesars Entertainment Corp. announced

Wednesday that the singer's residency would resume with 40 performances between August and January.

The singer says in a statement that it was her husband Rene Angelil who urged her return to the stage since last performing at The Colosseum on July 29 and cancelling a

fall Asian tour. Angelil has been recovering after having a cancerous tumor removed last year.

A representative for Dion confirmed earlier this month that she would eventually return but without four of her band members whose contracts weren't renewed. □



# Which way will One Direction go after Malik's departure?

**SANDY COHEN**

**AP Entertainment Writer**

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — David Lee Roth and Van Halen. Noel Gallagher and Oasis. And now Zayn Malik and One Direction.

Malik said Wednesday he is leaving the chart-topping British boy band "to be a normal 22-year-old who is able to relax and have some private time out of the spotlight."

His name immediately became a top trending topic online — #AlwaysInOurHeartsZaynMalik — as the band announced it would continue its world tour, "On the Road Again," without Malik. Plans also remained in place for the now-foursome to record an album later this year.

"For kids now, it's truly the equivalent of if one of the Beatles would have left at the height of their success," said Rolling Stone Senior Writer Brian Hiatt of Malik's departure.

One middle-school teacher said the day was among the toughest in her career as tween girls ran out of class in tears.

But while it may be sad news for Malik's fans, his departure isn't necessarily bad for the band — at least not immediately. The remaining four members have concert dates scheduled through October and they promise a future for the group.

Unlike Van Halen, which started over when it replaced Roth with a new lead singer (Sammy Hagar); or Oasis, which essentially disbanded when Gallagher left, One Direction is all vocalists, making it

easier to absorb a loss.

The band's only choice now is to continue with four, Hiatt said: "I can't imagine, under any circumstances, them replacing him." One Direction formed in 2010 after five teenagers — Harry Styles, Liam

Payne, Niall Horan, Louis Tomlinson and Malik arguably the most popular. Cowell said in a statement Wednesday that One Direction fans "can rest assured that Niall, Liam, Harry and Louis are hugely excited about the future of the

group, then left again, followed by another member's departure. The group now records and tours as a trio and just released a single this month.

It's too soon to say which way One Direction, or Malik, might go, but



In this March 25, 2015 file photo, members of One Direction, from left, Harry Styles, Liam Payne, Louis Tomlinson, Zayn Malik and Niall Horan, wave during an event to promote their film "One Direction: This Is US," in Makuhari, near Tokyo.

**Associated Press**

Payne, Niall Horan, Louis Tomlinson and Malik — auditioned individually for the British TV talent show "The X Factor." Simon Cowell had the idea of putting them together as a boy band.

They didn't win the competition, but they went on to score hits and win young hearts around the world with their perky pop and cheeky personalities. Each member has

band."

Another British boy band faced a similar challenge in the 1990s, with unsettled results. Take That started as a singing, dancing group of five. When one of its members left, the band finished its world tour, released a single, then broke up. It reunited as a foursome almost a decade later and found new success. The fifth member briefly

making a clean split was a good first step, writes Jason Lipshutz, an associate editor at Billboard.

"Zayn's exit from One Direction is painful because it means something has ended, but it would have been vastly more painful to approach the next few months with a sense of unsteadiness," he says. "Now, Zayn is gone, and One Direction can move on." □



In this Feb. 13, 2015 file photo, actor-comedian J.B. Smoove appears during an interview in New York. Smoove will appear at the Garden of Laughs at Madison Square Garden in New York on Saturday, March 28, an event benefiting the Garden of Dreams Foundation.

**JOHN CARUCCI**

**Associated Press**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — JB Smoove says he's "psyched" to be performing this weekend at the

Garden of Laughs benefit at Madison Square Garden.

The actor-comedian sees his participation as the perfect confluence of oppor-

## JB Smoove 'psyched' to perform at Garden of Laughs benefit

tunities: He'll be supporting a great cause, playing in his home city and making a connection with a live audience.

"That immediate response, it's like a high," Smoove said in an interview.

He added: "I don't think anything beats direct contact with people and that immediate response."

Smoove is one of six comedians set to take the stage Saturday night. He'll be joined by Dane Cook, Lewis Black, Bill Burr, Billy Gardell and John Oliver. He refers to the lineup as "an ice cream parlor of comedian flavors."

"I haven't figured out what flavor I am, yet. Maybe I'm butterscotch or even mocha," Smoove joked Tuesday. The show benefits the Garden of Dreams Foundation, which works with all areas of The Madison Square Garden Co. — including the New York Knicks, the New York Rangers, the New York Liberty, MSG Entertainment and MSG Networks — to brighten the lives of children facing obstacles.

Smoove, known for his role as Leon Black, Larry David's sidekick in the HBO series "Curb Your Enthusiasm," began his career as

a standup comedian. He also was a writer on "Saturday Night Live." Now he's the host of the MSG network talk show "Four Courses with JB Smoove," which just completed its third season.

That means he has the extra responsibility of representing MSG when he takes the stage.

"I have to be supportive of Madison Square Garden and their interest in the plight of children," he said. "Their interest is my interest. ... I'm part of the team. I'm the power forward. It's time to pass me the ball, so pass me the ball." □





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